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Security Council

Sixty-second year

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Friday, 19 October 2007, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1770 (2007) (S/2007/608)

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07-55351 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1770 (2007) (S/2007/608)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/608, containing the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1770 (2007).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and by Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, representative of the United States, on behalf of the Multinational Force.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Mr. Pascoe: Before you, Mr. President, is the first report issued pursuant to resolution 1770 (2007), and it reflects the expanded nature of the new mandate and preparations made by the United Nations for that role. The report before you also illustrates the magnitude of the challenges facing Iraq and the efforts of the Government of Iraq, neighbouring countries, the United Nations and the wider international community to address them.

Iraq is faced today with an exceptionally complex series of overlapping sectarian, political and ethnic conflicts that have proved beyond the capacity of any one actor or policy initiative to resolve. Violence aimed at civilian populations and members of the Government continues to impede efforts to establish stability in the country and makes national dialogue challenging. Increasing levels of displacement add to an already alarming humanitarian crisis. Current conditions, therefore, greatly impact the ability of the United Nations to perform its duties and provide assistance to those in need.

However, as the Secretary-General noted in his report, there is an opportunity today that should not be missed. September witnessed the lowest number of Iraqi casualties for the year. The ceasefire declared by the Mahdi Army, the Sunni insurgent alliance against Al-Qaida, the pact reached by the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council and the Sadrists and the efforts by the Multinational Force in Iraq and the Iraqi security forces all appear to be contributing to this effect. These events represent a political opportunity to transform military-political development into a basis for achieving broad national reconciliation.

With the adoption of resolution 1770 (2007), the Council recognizes the need for an enhanced effort to assist the people and the leadership of Iraq. In particular, the new mandate creates the basis for broader United Nations efforts in advancing national dialogue, and the Secretary-General's new Special Representative will immediately explore possibilities when he reaches Iraq in two weeks.

While it has proven difficult to strike a mutually acceptable balance between the competing claims on the basic issues of Iraq's future amid ongoing violence, mistrust and bitter memories, Iraqi leaders must move beyond rhetoric and mere statements of intent. The challenge now is to make progress on the constitutional review and major legislation which is central to the

process of reconciliation, such as that relating to oil and the law to reform de-Baathification.

To truly make a difference on the ground, however, these developments will need to form part of, and contribute to, a wider political reconciliation process in Iraq. This is primarily the responsibility of the Iraqi Government, and the United Nations stands ready to assist to that end. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) also remains committed to supporting Iraqi preparations for future electoral events by working to build the capacity of the Independent High Electoral Commission and advising on key electoral legislation.

Resolution 1770 (2007) envisions a strengthened United Nations role in assisting the Government of Iraq in promoting the constructive engagement of regional countries, and the high-level meeting on Iraq co-hosted by the Secretary-General and Prime Minister al-Maliki on 22 September reinforced support for the United Nations role in this area.

Iraq's neighbouring countries, and others in the region, remain vital for the stability of Iraq. While competing views and national interests exist, all of Iraq's neighbours have an interest in limiting the deterioration of the situation in Iraq, and no one wishes to see instability engulf the region or spread to their country. There is a need for neighbouring countries to embrace a responsible and measured approach to Iraq's challenges. As the report highlights, the dialogue among Iraq's neighbours and other key international actors initiated at Sharm el-Sheikh is encouraging. The three working groups have convened and have discussed concrete issues. The United Nations has offered to support a mechanism to ensure adequate follow-up on the expanded meetings of Iraq's neighbours and the working groups. It is our hope that the next expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbours, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in early November 2007, will address this matter in a constructive manner.

The high-level meeting on 22 September also highlighted progress made in the implementation of the International Compact with Iraq and in other aspects of development and reconstruction assistance. The Compact secretariat continues to oversee the work of thematic working groups and to make progress on a six-month work plan intended to move all aspects of the Compact forward.

The humanitarian situation in Iraq continues to be alarming and provides ample evidence of the impact violence in Iraq has on civilians on a daily basis. The estimated number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) rose to 4.2 million, with monthly displacement rates climbing to over 60,000 persons. The Iraqi Cabinet decision to provide financial assistance to refugee host countries, in accordance with the commitment made in Geneva last April, is a welcome and much-needed development. Now it is time to finalize the delivery mechanism for that support so that vital assistance to the refugee population is immediately bolstered. The international community also has a large assistance role to play, and I hope that all commitments are honoured in a timely manner. The ultimate solution to the humanitarian crisis, however, will only be realized when the political, economic and security situation inside Iraq permits the safe return of refugees and IDPs to their homes.

The Secretary-General's latest report once again expresses serious concern about the current human rights situation in Iraq. The Government of Iraq has a particular responsibility to bring perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice, as well as to strengthen the institutions that promote the rule of law, particularly the security forces and the judiciary. The United Nations welcomes the commitment of the Iraqi Government to that goal. UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are committed to working closely with the Government on how best to realize an early improvement in the human rights situation.

Taking into account the current security situation, the United Nations is working to create the necessary preconditions to fulfil an enhanced role in Iraq. The Secretary-General has increased the staff ceilings in Baghdad from 65 to 85 and in Erbil from 29 to 35; an outreach programme that places national liaison officers in each of the Governors' offices has begun, and we are looking into re-establishing the United Nations presence in Basra. UNAMI and the country team have also adopted an area-based approach that expands activities where circumstances are more permissible. The Mission continues to work to become increasingly self-sufficient in areas of logistical support and security, and plans for a new integrated headquarters in Baghdad have been developed.

In the light of the tasks and challenges before us, the United Nations will continue to rely on Member States for support. It is important that the United Nations be afforded the necessary political and humanitarian space to implement the new mandate, and the ability of the Organization to talk with all sides must be protected and respected. Security arrangements and financial and logistical backing are also essential for the success of the United Nations Mission in Iraq.

We are grateful to those Member States that have provided protection and logistical support to the United Nations presence in Iraq, including those providing air support and troops for the Distinct Entity to provide security for UNAMI. Given the new mandate in Iraq, I urge Member States to provide additional financial and logistical resources for the Mission. That includes funding for dedicated air assets, support for funding for the new integrated United Nations facility in Baghdad and additional required security arrangements, such as the provision of military advisers.

Of immediate concern is the status of the trust fund established to support the Distinct Entity that provides protection for the United Nations in accordance with Security Council resolution 1546 (2004). This security arrangement will be required at least through 2008. However, the trust fund will be exhausted next month. Without immediate financial assistance, the ability of the United Nations to operate in Iraq could be severely compromised.

In conclusion, strong international efforts to counter the unfolding crises in Iraq are critical. The international community not only has a vital security stake in the stability of Iraq; it also has a responsibility to encourage and enable the Government of Iraq to build inclusive and cumulative processes that can bring about stability. While the Government of Iraq acknowledges that it has the primary responsibility for this task, the magnitude and number of challenges confronting the Government entitle it to call upon the international community for necessary assistance. It is our belief that the new United Nations mandate, matched by strong international support, provides the necessary framework to move towards building a more stable Iraq.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, Permanent Representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): It is my pleasure to report today on behalf of the Multinational Forces in Iraq (MNF-I), as requested by Security Council resolutions 1546 (2004), 1637 (2005) and 1723 (2006).

I was pleased to hear the report on the work of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), especially in the light of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1770 (2007) and the appointment of Mr. Staffan de Mistura as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We appreciated the efforts of former Special Representative Qazi, and are ready to work closely with Mr. De Mistura on how we can best support UNAMI's efforts under its expanded mandate. We look forward to the work of UNAMI in its expanded role, especially in assisting the Government of Iraq to implement its programme of national reconciliation, regional engagement and humanitarian relief.

The United States shares with the people of Iraq the goal of achieving a secure, stable and democratic Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours. To reach that goal, Iraq must overcome profound political, economic and security challenges. Progress in those areas is inherently linked. For example, when the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I) and Iraqi security forces made security gains in the provinces of Al Anbar and Diyala, we enabled the provincial councils to hold regular meetings, which in turn led to progress in restoring services, developing the economy and executing provincial budgets. As a result, by September the provincial government of Al Anbar had committed 80 per cent of its 2006 capital budget and 49 per cent of its 2007 budget.

Last year, recognizing that MNF-I could help them to eject Al-Qaida, tribes in Al Anbar began to fight with us against extremists. As a result, the landscape of Al Anbar is dramatically different. The security progress has been extraordinary. Seven months ago violence was still rampant. Residents of Al Anbar lived in fear of Al-Qaida, and MNF-I troops were under daily attack. Now the situation is largely stable and quiet, permitting reconstruction to take place. Similar scenes are unfolding in parts of Diyala and Ninawa. More and more Iraqis are mobilizing, with the help of MNF-I and Iraqi security forces, to evict Al-Qaida and extremist forces from their communities.

Shia extremists are also facing rejection. Recent attacks by extremist elements of Jaish al-Mahdi on

worshipers in Karbala provoked a backlash and triggered calls for Jaish al-Mahdi to cease attacks against Iraqi and MNF-I forces.

A key challenge for Iraqis now is to link those positive developments in the provinces to the central Government in Baghdad. The growing ability of the provinces to design and execute budgets, and the readiness of the Central Government to provide resources for them, represent some of the nuts and bolts of good governance and are success stories.

The support of the central Government is also needed to maintain hard-won security in areas like Al Anbar, by supporting increases in locally generated police. The Iraqi Government has placed some 21,000 Anbaris on police rolls.

Improved security also creates the conditions for progress in the national economy. Infrastructure is being repaired, and markets are reviving. The Iraqi Government has reported growth of at least 6 per cent, with inflation slowing. The budget execution rate in the provinces is at least twice that of last year. In addition, the Government's 2007 budget allocates $10 billion to capital investment. Further improvement, especially in the countryside, could bring down transport costs for agricultural and manufactured goods. One sign of confidence in the future of Iraq's economy was the recent issuance of three licenses for mobile telephones, valued at a record $3.75 billion.

International and regional engagement are also improving. In addition, with the adoption of resolution 1770 (2007) in August, we are seeing the International Compact with Iraq moving forward. The United Nations has reported progress in 75 per cent of the 400 areas Iraq has identified for action. We are also looking forward to the next meeting of the expanded neighbours' group, which will convene in Istanbul in less than two weeks. Staffan de Mistura, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq, will be in attendance. We look forward to hearing his ideas on how the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq can support the neighbours' group in its constructive engagement with Iraq.

Unfortunately, some of Iraq's neighbours appear to believe that they can benefit from instability in Iraq. While claiming to support Iraq, Iran has provided lethal aid to both radical Shia and Sunni militants inside Iraq, who attack Iraqi officials, innocent civilians and Coalition forces.

Syria is also playing a destabilizing role in Iraq. Although Syria hosted a meeting of the neighbours' border security working group, it continues to provide safe haven for elements of the former regime, who now serve as key financiers and leaders of the insurgency. While Syria has arrested some foreign terrorists bound for Iraq, it remains the principal transit hub for Iraq-bound terrorists. To make credible claims to support the Iraqi people, Syria should do more — such as implement a screening process to make it more difficult for foreign extremists to enter and transit to Iraq.

On the security front, the 2007 surge has given besieged communities the confidence to work with MNF-I to defeat Al-Qaida and violent extremists. The military objectives are, in large measure, being met. Population security measures have made it more difficult for terrorists to conduct attacks. The overall number of security incidents in Iraq continues to decline, because we have dealt significant blows to Al-Qaida in Iraq, and we have disrupted Shia militia extremists. The overall number of civilian deaths has also declined in 2007, although the numbers are still at unacceptable levels. The number of arms caches found and cleared in 2007 increased by approximately 20 per cent over the previous year. From June to September, attacks with improvised explosive devices decreased by about 20 per cent, as compared to the previous year.

Iraqi security forces continue to grow and to shoulder more of the load, albeit slowly and amid continuing concerns about the sectarian tendencies of some elements in their ranks, inadequate logistics and supporting institutions and an insufficient number of qualified commissioned and non-commissioned officers. There are now 152 Iraqi army, national police and special operations forces battalions operating alongside MNF-I — about two thirds of which are capable of leading operations, albeit with some MNF-I support. The Iraqi Defence and Interior Ministries are employing 445,000 people, a number that could reach 519,000 by the end of the year. MNF-I has employed counterinsurgency practices that underscore the importance of units living among the people they are securing. Accordingly, our forces have established dozens of joint security stations and patrol bases, manned by MNF-I and Iraqi forces, in Baghdad and other areas across Iraq.

In mid-June, when all the surge brigades were in place, MNF-I launched a series of offensive operations

focused on expanding the gains achieved in the preceding months in Al Anbar province — clearing Baquba and several key Baghdad neighbourhoods and important areas in the so-called belt around Baghdad and pursuing Al-Qaida in the Diyala River Valley and other areas. Meanwhile, MNF-I engaged in dialogue with former insurgent groups and tribes, in conjunction with Iraqi officials, to broker local ceasefires and gain their support in rooting out Al-Qaida in their communities. We also continue to emphasize the development of Iraqi security forces. Four provinces have already been handed over to provincial Iraqi control. We anticipate that several more will be transferred to Iraqi control in the coming months.

The security situation in Iraq is being transformed. Some of the players are changing sides. Despite ongoing violence, we see a qualitative shift against extremism as an improvement. Iraqis are taking on more responsibility for protecting themselves. But, in the coming months, we must redouble our efforts to improve security within Iraq and prevent human suffering, while preserving regional security and stability. The leadership of Iraq also has a responsibility to take concrete steps to pursue reconciliation, so that the political track can catch up with the improvements in security.

On 26 August, Iraq's five most prominent leaders from three major communities expressed gratitude for the sacrifices these forces have made for Iraq and agreed on the need for the continued presence of the Multinational Force in Iraq. To that end, Iraqis stressed the importance of renewing the mandate of resolution 1723 (2006) for another year. We expect to put forth a draft resolution in that regard before the end of the year.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank the representative of the United States for his presentation of the quarterly oral report of the multinational force and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs for his comprehensive briefing on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

This is the first meeting to be held since the adoption of resolution 1770 (2007), which constitutes a turning point for the presence of the United Nations in Iraq. Following reduced United Nations role in Iraq in recent years, the time has come for the international Organization to play a more effective part in assisting the people and Government of Iraq in the process of achieving security, stability and development.

The United Nations provides valuable assistance to Iraq in several areas, such as constitutional support, electoral assistance, reconstruction, development, humanitarian assistance, human rights and other areas that will help to speed up Iraq's extrication from its current situation, regain its natural position as a stable, prosperous and active State in the international community, and enable its people to benefit from its enormous wealth. There is no doubt that the United Nations can make a more effective contribution not only in those areas, but in other areas as well, such as encouraging the implementation of the International Compact with Iraq and taking action to promote the constructive role of the neighbouring countries in order to serve the interests of Iraq and the Iraqi people.

The United Nations can also play a bigger role in stimulating national dialogue in Iraq among the various groups, given its comparative advantages and the prevailing conditions in Iraq. We agree with the Secretary-General that there is a need to seize this opportunity. As time passes, we are becoming increasingly convinced of the importance of national reconciliation in Iraq among the various groups of its people, and that this accord constitutes the most important precondition for emerging from the current difficult situation.

In order to succeed in their efforts to restore stability to Iraq, build its national institutions and reinvigorate its development, the Government of Iraq, UNAMI and the multinational force need to make concerted efforts and cooperate effectively among themselves.

With regard to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons, the situation is deteriorating by the day and, given its humanitarian dimensions, constitutes a threat to stability. The Government of Iraq therefore needs to resolve the problem, with the help of the international community, and necessary assistance must be provided to the neighbouring countries that are bearing the brunt of the situation.

Another cause for concern is the issue of the accountability of private security companies for their violations of international humanitarian law and the need for them to be held accountable for their crimes. No violation of human rights in Iraq must be overlooked and due process in dealing with detainees

must be ensured. All who commit such violations must be held to account.

Ensuring the stability of the security situation remains at the top of Iraq's concerns. In our view, it is essential to address the issue of stability through an integrated approach that includes the continuous strengthening of the Iraqi security forces, the rehabilitation of former combatants from the armed groups, and solving the humanitarian and socio-economic problems that negatively affect the welfare of the Iraqi people. National reconciliation should also be supported and Iraqi leaders need to act in a spirit of responsibility in that regard.

Steps are currently being taken to strengthen UNAMI so that it can carry out its mandated tasks pursuant to resolution 1770 (2007). Ensuring the safety and security of the Mission's personnel should be a top priority, especially in view of the lack of security in Iraq.

Finally, we wish the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and all the personnel of UNAMI success in their difficult task.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing on the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) covering the months that have passed since the Council adopted resolution 1770 (2007), which reviewed and considerably broadened United Nations authority in Iraq.

We listened attentively to the briefing given by the Permanent Representative of the United States, Mr. Khalilzad, on the work of the multinational force.

Russia shares many of the assessments and concerns on the situation in Iraq set out in the Secretary-General's report. Indeed, the situation there continues to remain extremely tense. In spite of some signs of improvement in the situation in Baghdad and a number of provinces, violence and terrorist activity remain integral realities in Iraq.

In our view, the greatest threat today is the sectarian divisions in Iraqi society referred to at length in the report. That phenomenon proves the need for focused resolve in attempts to find a solution; it also continues to sink new roots into Iraqi soil. We have also heard alarming predictions about an inevitable hardening of the civil conflict and even the collapse of the Iraqi State.

The complex situation is eloquently illustrated in the problems of the future of Kirkuk and the tense situation on the Iraq-Turkey border. In that regard, we call once again for a peaceful settlement in the northern Iraqi regions and reiterate that we fully support the principle of the territorial integrity of Iraq and Turkey alike.

The escalation of the Iraqi crisis might not only dangerously destabilize the entire Middle East, but also spill over far beyond its boundaries. It is obvious that Iraq's neighbours would not be well served by such developments. We do not believe that the point of no return has been reached. The possibility of achieving stability remains. We are convinced that it is impossible to normalize the situation in Iraq exclusively by force. We therefore feel that a realistic and lasting settlement can be achieved only through political means, by developing broad-based inter-Iraqi dialogue and achieving national reconciliation and harmony. The United Nations can and must help the Iraqis to do so.

Judging from the report, the United Nations side is in agreement. Moreover, we fully support the Secretary-General's assertion that the United Nations, participating in the Iraqi process, must enjoy the right to interact with all parties and that this right must be defended.

We recognize that, bearing in mind the current acute security problems, it will not be easy for UNAMI to assume new tasks, but we need to do everything we can to that end, first and foremost by restoring Iraqi confidence in the United Nations representatives. It is therefore important to develop a mechanism for cooperation with Iraq's authorities that would allow the Mission to play a credible in political and socio-economic processes initiated by the leadership of that country. In that regard, Baghdad must ratify the status-of-mission agreement as soon as possible so as to settle once and for all the legal formalities for the duration of its stay in the country. Finally, we believe that a firm schedule for the multinational force's stay might also help to ease tension in Iraq.

We understand that a hasty withdrawal of coalition forces would have deleterious consequences, but that is not the true issue.

We are convinced that a timeline for reduction of the foreign military presence in Iraq, with the prospect of full withdrawal, would substantially defuse the situation. We would like to draw the attention of Council members to an incident to which the report refers: the killing of Iraqi civilians by personnel of the private security firm Blackwater. We share the concerns stated in the report of the Secretary-General, and we support the approach of the Iraqi authorities to put an end to activities by the many mercenary groups operating on Iraqi soil that violate Iraqi law. I should mention that the exploits of those so-called sub-contractors are hurting not only Iraqis, but also Baghdad-based foreign diplomatic representatives, including Russian representatives.

We believe that, without effective international assistance to the political settlement process, the leaders of Iraqi communities and parties will have difficulty in overcoming their mutual distrust. As early as 2003 we proposed the convening of a representative international conference on Iraq, with the participation of all major political forces in the country, including its patriotic opposition, leading world Powers and influential regional States. Although our initiative was not acted upon at that time, it remains in force. We have supported and will continue to support all proposals that are in keeping with that approach.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing and the representative of the United States for his briefing on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/608) indicates a reduction in the level of acts of violence, but in Peru's estimation that has not yet been sufficient to prevent the continued deterioration of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the wave of refugees and internally displaced persons who are fleeing the violence in Iraq. Nor has there been a significant change in the human rights situation, in spite of improved cooperation between the Iraqi Government and the Multinational Force, as shown in the most recent human rights report by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). On the contrary, in some cases the situation has deteriorated, in particular with regard to religious and ethnic minorities. Iraqi leaders have not taken advantage of the decrease in acts of violence to unblock the deadlocked political process or to prevent sectarian fighting.

Living conditions continue to deteriorate. Even the water supply is no longer guaranteed; cholera has broken out and school attendance is of great concern. The worsening situation means that the cost of reconstructing Iraq's social, economic and political fabric continues to increase. That is the price that Iraqi civilians are paying for the lack of dialogue between the country's leaders and the lack of a spirit of compromise in order to make headway on the sensitive issues on the political agenda.

Peru is extremely concerned by the present internal political situation in Iraq. Neither the parliament's failure to take decisions nor the weakening of the Government due to boycotts and resignations by some of its members contribute to the stability of the country. This deepens distrust among communities.

It is important to remember that the Iraqis themselves bear primary responsibility for the future of their country. We hope that the country's various sectors will understand that international efforts at this stage of reconstruction require their commitment to dialogue and reconciliation. We hope that the Prime Minister will make every effort to lead that dialogue and to work to revive the spirit of compromise among his fellow citizens.

We believe that, to achieve that goal, essential elements for dialogue and national reconciliation continue to be the following: security issues; the distribution of oil revenues; resolution of the problem of Kirkuk; constitutional reform; allocation of functions between the central Government and the regions; and de-Baathification. In order to encourage dialogue and democratic reconciliation, the security situation must first and foremost be brought under control. Terrorism, as well as militias and other armed groups beyond the control of the State, must be eradicated.

In this struggle, human rights and international humanitarian law must be respected by all with a stake in maintaining law and order and public security. In a democracy, use of force not subject to the law and inconsistent with respect for human rights and international humanitarian law cannot be permitted. A single, credible and non-sectarian body is required to

legitimize the use of force in Iraq. Here, the militias must be disarmed. Effective, credible and legitimate security forces can be partners in stabilizing the country and fully restoring its sovereignty. These responsibilities must be transferred more quickly from the Multinational Force to the Iraqi forces.

Peru also regrets the deterioration in the human rights situation and urges Iraqi authorities and the international community to continue to build a democracy that respects human rights. There must be no place for impunity in the establishment of democratic institutions in Iraq. The raison d'être of a State is to protect the lives and the human rights of its citizens. Those who attack the rule of law or human rights should be called to account in a court of law.

In the endeavour to restore hope to the Iraqi people, progress in rebuilding the infrastructure and economic and social development are of the greatest importance. The International Compact with Iraq is an important framework for international assistance. Conditions for its implementation will improve with improvements in security, reconciliation and transparency, and with the enactment of national laws that reflect solid political agreements on the management of natural resources. Iraq's oil wealth must be dealt with in a responsible and transparent manner. Distribution of oil revenue in a negotiated fashion will help to improve the climate of understanding among Iraqis, and will engender confidence that those resources will benefit all citizens.

For any effort to stabilize Iraq to be viable, neighbouring countries too must cooperate. Iraq and its neighbours must continue to act cautiously and diligently to address urgent issues on their common agenda while avoiding unilateral action that would complicate the delicate situation in Iraq. Peru urges a stronger spirit of multilateral assistance for Iraq.

Finally, Peru expresses its support for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We consider that it should continue, consistent with its mandate and with the possibilities on the ground, to work to consolidate all activities that can help attain political and legal stability, institutional and economic reconstruction, humanitarian assistance and the protection of human rights in Iraq.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I wish to join previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Ambassador Khalilzad for their briefings.

Iraq continues to face challenges that involve considerable risks to the region to the entire international community. They include political, security, humanitarian and economic challenges.

The humanitarian and security situation described this morning is extremely disturbing, inasmuch as continuing violence forces ever-larger numbers of civilians to flee their homes. There are now more than 2 million internally displaced persons and more than 2 million refugees. In that vein, I wish to pay tribute to neighbouring countries and their peoples, who, in extraordinary conditions, have to date have taken in these refugees; I make special mention of Jordan and Syria.

For its part, France is supporting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in assisting internally displaced persons and refugees. In that context, it is now more necessary than ever to work together to find solutions by supporting the efforts of the Baghdad authorities. On Wednesday, 17 October, the President of the French Republic reaffirmed to President Talabani during his visit to Paris that France firmly supports the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. Of course, the Iraqis themselves understand that they must come together in order to regain control of their own future and to put in place institutions that can bring about a consensus that will enable them to build a society of peace.

The key is a genuine process of national reconciliation that is as inclusive as possible in order to isolate the forces that threaten the unity, sovereignty and stability of Iraq. Moreover, the States of the region have an important role to play and should therefore show sincere and complete willingness to contribute to stability and reconstruction in Iraq. France supports the process involving neighbouring countries that led to the establishment of thematic working groups, and hopes that this process will lead to tangible results at the ministerial meeting in the beginning of November in Istanbul, where Mr. Kouchner, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, will participate.

In the context of a withdrawal horizon for foreign forces, the international community through the United Nations should strengthen its own mobilization. We support strengthening the role of the United Nations

Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which permitted the adoption of resolution 1770 (2007). After the high-level meeting of 22 September, the first proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/608) — strengthening of staffing in Baghdad and Arbil, a United Nations presence in Basra, setting up a follow-up mechanism of the neighbouring countries process — all of these proposals open the door to strengthening the different areas where the United Nations plays a role.

In the political area, there is a possibility to contribute to dialogue and national reconciliation. We are also thinking about what could be done to assist the grave humanitarian situation, to strengthen the protection of civilians, to enforce respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and to fight against impunity. The initial responsibility lies, of course, with the Iraqi Government, as it is not only the protection of their own people that is involved, but also the protection of United Nations staff and associated staff. It is a disturbing situation as we have seen in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/608). It is urgent to act.

In terms of economics, there is the International Compact with Iraq. In this respect, we should recall that in order for international assistance and cooperation to be effective and in order for economic growth to be a permanent fixture in Iraq, the authorities must establish mechanisms and rules of management that allow for good governance.

This strengthening of the United Nations presence on the ground should obviously bear in mind the constraints having to do with security. Here I would like to pay tribute to the work done by UNAMI, as well as the humanitarian workers. They are operating under conditions that make it very difficult and dangerous to contribute to the protection of civilians and to provide assistance to people in need.

France supports and will continue to support the United Nations in this difficult undertaking. My country also intends to contribute to thinking done within the European Union, encouraging it to become more resolutely involved in Iraq through specific initiatives.

As Bernard Kouchner indicated in New York on 22 September, France will become involved in particular in supporting the health sector and justice, in this latter case through the training of magistrates in Iraq. Starting in the next few weeks, we will launch the first initiatives in the northern part of the country with an increase in France's consular presence.

With everyone's joint efforts, the people of Iraq will be able to find the peace and security that they are entitled in a State that is unified, free and democratic. We are positively committed to this.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Lynn Pascoe, for his comprehensive briefing.

My delegation also thanks the representative of the United States, who spoke on behalf of the Multinational Force.

Ongoing violence in Iraq continues to pose serious challenges to the Government and people of Iraq in their efforts to achieve progress in reconstruction and nation-building. After years of hardship, the Iraqi people deserve peace, stability and progress. Considering the significance of security and stability for making progress in the political and socio-economic sectors, my delegation has little doubt that the Government of Iraq recognizes the importance of enhanced efforts, in cooperation with international forces, to find viable solution to the security concerns in the country.

Since conflict in Iraq has been unfolding across ethnic, sectarian and political lines, Indonesia holds the view that responsibility for restoring security and stability lies not only with the Iraqi Government, but also with all factions in the country. In this regard, Indonesia welcomes the ceasefire by some factions that led to the decrease in violence during September 2007.

The key to sustainable peace in Iraq is unity. Continued high levels of displacement and political gridlock have reduced the opportunity for concord. My delegation therefore believes that the people of Iraq should stand side-by-side at all levels, set aside all ethnic, religious and political differences and work together in order to respond to the challenges that continue to confront the country. Genuine commitment by all factions to political dialogue and reconciliation is needed more now than ever.

The international community should leave no stone unturned in promoting conditions conducive to such reconciliation. In that regard, my delegation commends the efforts of the Special Representative of

the Secretary-General in maintaining contacts with political, religious and tribal leaders to encourage an inclusive political process aimed at bolstering security improvements in Iraq.

The International Compact with Iraq, which is premised on a reciprocal relationship between peacebuilding and economic prosperity, remains an important framework for international partnership with Iraq. The Compact will require institutional support in order to be effective. Accordingly, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the Compact secretariat as an agency of the Government of Iraq operating with the support of the United Nations to facilitate the implementation of the Compact.

The reaffirmation of support expressed by delegations in the September high-level meeting on Iraq reflects the continuing solidarity of the international community with Iraq. In our view, such a reaffirmation should help to strengthen the commitment of Iraqis to the goals of the Compact.

The continuing violence in Iraq has brought about serious humanitarian consequences. It has caused not only displacement, but also restriction of movement and limitation of access for humanitarian operations. We are troubled by reports of the increase in the number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons. The condition faced by Iraqi children is also a source of particular concern.

With 4.2 million Iraqis being displaced, humanitarian assistance becomes a daunting but essential task. In this regard, Indonesia welcomes the launch of a joint appeal by a number of United Nations specialized agencies in September 2007 to address the urgent health needs of Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries.

Coordination is essential in implementing well-targeted humanitarian aid for the Iraqi displaced persons and refugees. Accordingly, Indonesia believes that the United Nations can play a key role in supporting the Iraqi Government and host neighbouring countries to coordinate their humanitarian activities.

Support from countries in the region remains instrumental in building the capacity of the Iraqi Government to respond to various challenges. The continued implementation of the outcome of the Sharm el-Sheikh conference, including its working groups, is of paramount importance. We also attach great importance to the next expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbours to be convened in Turkey next month.

International partnership and support are key for Iraq as it faces the innumerable challenges ahead. The role and contribution of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is particularly pertinent in helping the Iraqis achieve their goals. My delegation recognizes the increasing responsibility of UNAMI as tasked by Security Council resolution 1770 (2007), which my delegation fully supported. We, however, underline the importance to ensure a balance between the expansion of tasks and availability of adequate resources. This will eventually assure the success of the Mission.

While taking into account the security challenges, the deployment of UNAMI to new areas will increase access for the Iraqis to international assistance. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the dispatch of a UNAMI team to explore the possibility of deploying staff to a new location in Basra.

Finally, I wish to reiterate Indonesia's full support for UNAMI and its work in Iraq.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): Like previous speakers, I wish to express my thanks to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2007/608) and to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for the briefing.

We fully share both the positive and negative assessments of others regarding the challenges, so I will be very brief in my remarks.

I also wish to thank Ambassador Khalilzad for his briefing on behalf of the Multinational force, and I must say that we have noted and strongly welcome the positive and encouraging developments on which he has briefed us. Let us hope that in the future, those encouraging developments will deepen and expand. I believe that we all have the responsibility to give oxygen to this process.

I think our starting point should be the Secretary-General's view, which was recalled by Ambassador Pascoe: "there is an opportunity today that should not be missed". Once again, I think that that is a starting point. We are at a critical juncture, and we have to move quickly and decisively in all directions. Any improvement in the security situation is an opportunity to take, so that we can build what Iraqis really need: a

national compact, a shared vision of their common future as a people and as a nation.

As stated in the report, by Mr. Pascoe in his briefing and by other speakers preceding me, the responsibility for the internal political process lies with the Iraqi people and their legitimate institutions. But, at the same time, the United Nations now has a fundamental and substantially expanded role, as set forth in resolution 1770 (2007). The Iraqi people, as Ambassador Qazi told us in June, are faced with choices that "are not black or white; nor are they zero-sum" (*S/PV.5693, p. 3*). The United Nations is uniquely suited to identify gray areas that can accommodate all the legitimate concerns of the participants in the political process, and it is up to all of us to empower it to do so. I believe, that, as Ambassador Pascoe told us, "it is important that the United Nations be afforded the necessary political and humanitarian space to implement the new mandate, and the ability of the Organization to talk with all sides must be protected and respected (*supra*)".

Another crucial element is the ongoing regional dialogue between Iraq and its neighbours, which has been touched upon by many previous speakers. We welcome last September's initiative, by the Secretary-General and the Iraqi Government, to convene a ministerial meeting. We strongly support the ongoing process that began with the extended meeting of neighbouring countries at Sharm el-Sheikh, and we look forward to the next meeting, to be held in Istanbul. We have also noted, as a positive sign, the indication of strong United Nations engagement in the process of facilitating the dialogue with the neighbours.

Furthermore, we continue to be extremely concerned by the humanitarian situation. We commend the efforts of those countries that have received Iraqi refugees, as well as the efforts of the United Nations. For its part, Italy responded to last July's Joint Appeal of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF by giving more than $4.2 million for activities to benefit Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons in Iraq, Syria and Jordan.

We have to proceed effectively in the implementation of the International Compact with Iraq and in the reconstruction effort. Italy, as Co-Chair of the Donor Committee of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI), is planning to convene the sixth meeting of the Donor Committee in Bari, Italy, on 28 and 29 October, in nine days' time. At the Bari meeting, we will consider the final recommendations emerging from the review of the IRFFI terms of reference, conducted during the past month. The goals of the review are, as we know, to ensure strong Iraqi ownership and leadership of the IRFFI process; to ensure clear alignment of the IRFFI with Iraqi priorities as contained in the country's national development strategy and the International Compact with Iraq; and to clarify and streamline the values component of IRFFI governance. We are confident that the revised terms of reference will respond to all those goals.

A more effective IRFFI will be an important tool at the disposal of the international community — a tool that responds to the appeal of Ambassador Pascoe that security arrangements and financial and logistical backing are also essential for the success of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. That is what we are trying to do.

At the same time, unified leadership by the Secretary-General, through his Special Representative for Iraq, over the contributions of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as stipulated in resolution 1770 (2007), is an essential step towards making the international contribution to Iraq's reconstruction more effective.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Permit me at the outset to thank Ambassador Pascoe for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/608). Belgium agrees with its analysis and its recommendations.

A little less than a year ago, the United Nations sent a double warning to Iraq and the international community as a whole: first, that there was a risk that the continued waves of terrorist attacks and sectarian violence could lead to a widespread civil war; and, secondly, that there was a danger that such a destabilization would affect not only Iraq, but the entire region.

A year later, that risk and that danger are far from having disappeared from Iraq. Certainly, we can cautiously welcome the fact that, for the first time, the number of victims seems to be on the decline, particularly in Baghdad. But, whether in Baghdad, Mosul or Basra, Iraqis — particularly civilians — belonging to all faiths and ethnic groups continue to suffer an intolerable level of violence. Today more than

yesterday, that security challenge cannot be overcome through an exclusively military approach.

With regard to its population, the Iraqi Government now has the obligation to redouble its efforts to achieve reconciliation among all parties, based on the notions of the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. To that end, the tools available to the Iraqis are well known: revising the Constitution to restore Iraqis' confidence in a State that guarantees that all communities can enjoy their right to participate in a common future; continuing the legislative work on sensitive issues such as the management of hydrocarbon resources, the Baathist legacy and the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution; and, finally, strengthening institutions — particularly the law enforcement forces — based on the democratic rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. For our country, the efforts of Iraq's Government and parliament over the past few months confirm the relevance of that assessment. However, a long road still lies ahead, and greater efforts are needed to attain the aforementioned objectives.

The other lesson of the past few months is the twofold realization of the international community: on the one hand, that the challenges facing Iraq do not end at its borders, but also affect neighbouring countries and the international community as a whole; and, on the other, that it is our duty and in our interests to help the Iraqi authorities in their efforts to find a response.

That realization has led to several initiatives, which Belgium welcomes and in which we have participated, directly or through the intermediary of the European Union: the conference of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on displaced persons, held in April at Geneva; the launching, in May at Sharm el-Sheikh, of the International Compact with Iraq, aimed at its reconstruction and development; the regional consultation organized at the ministerial level by the World Health Organization, held in late July at Damascus; the forthcoming meeting at Bari to discuss the future of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq; and, in early November at Istanbul, the continuation of Iraq's discussions with its neighbours and with major actors in the international community.

Belgium supports the process begun by the Iraqi Government in March in Baghdad. That systematization of a political and technical dialogue should permit increased stabilization of the region, with mutual respect for the strengthened sovereignty of Iraq and of its neighbouring States.

However, in addition to increasing the number of these initiatives, we should ensure that we maximize the benefits of the partnership thus created between Iraq and the international community, by empowering the Iraqi Government and regional actors and by guaranteeing, in addition to their unique characteristics, the complementarity and coherence of these initiatives so that we can have a real impact on the daily life of the populations concerned.

It is out of this concern for coherence that Belgium welcomes the renewed mandate that resolution 1770 (2007) gave to the United Nations in Iraq this summer. Although we are aware of the limits imposed by the persistent lack of security, we express our full support to the Secretary-General in his determination to have the United Nations play a strengthened role of coordinator and catalyst of everyone's efforts to help Iraqi people to build the country that they deserve.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to join others in thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his introductory remarks. We welcome the opportunity for a briefing by Ambassador Khalilzad on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Ashraf Qazi and to thank him for his distinguished contribution to the people of Iraq during his three-year tenure as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

Although the situation in Iraq has improved to some extent, the country still faces formidable challenges in the political, security, reconstruction and humanitarian spheres. The number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons has been increasing monthly. The humanitarian situation in Iraq has become the most serious humanitarian crisis confronting the world today. How to further stabilize the situation so that the process of Iraq's peaceful reconstruction and reconciliation can embark upon a smooth path is an issue meriting serious consideration by the Iraqi Government and the international community. We subscribe to the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2007/608).

Political compromise and genuine attempts to work across ethnic, sectarian and political lines are

needed now more than ever. In the final analysis, the future of Iraq should be decided by the Iraqi themselves. It is our hope that all political leaders in Iraq will demonstrate courage, take resolute measures, positively respond to the aspirations of the Iraqi people and the international community and seek unity and cooperation. Of course, achieving the proper solution of the Iraqi situation and its issues also poses a test for the international community. The United Nations should continue to stand by the Iraqi people and should be prepared to provide all useful assistance and help, as required.

Resolution 1770 (2007) is very important. It authorizes the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to play a more active role in assisting Iraq in national reconciliation, regional dialogue, economic reconstruction and humanitarian relief. In that connection, we are looking forward to full engagement by the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, once he is in Iraq. We hope that he will implement the mandate of the resolution and take full advantage of the impartiality, expertise and authority of the United Nations, and that he will make a fully committed effort to change the Iraqi situation for the better. It is our hope, too, that the parties inside and outside Iraq will provide energetic support to the Special Representative, to provide him with the conditions and space he needs to play for his designated role.

Ensuring the safety and security of the facilities and personnel of UNAMI is an important prerequisite for the effective operation of the Mission. The security risks in Iraq continue to constrain UNAMI's daily operations. We express our serious concern about that. It is our belief that the Iraqi Government and the Multinational Force should shoulder the critical responsibility in that regard. No effort should be spared to provide UNAMI with all the necessary security guarantees so that it can carry out the operations mandated by the Security Council.

A stable, united, prosperous Iraq will not only live up to the aspirations and expectations of all of the Iraqi people, but also be conducive to the peace and tranquillity of Iraq's neighbours and of the Middle East region as a whole. The Sharm el-Sheikh process initiated last May shows the resolve of countries of the region to strengthen regional cooperation and maintain the stability of Iraq. The international community should pay heightened attention to the views and suggestions of those regional countries on the issue of Iraq. We are happy to see that Iraq has improved its relations with neighbouring and other regional countries. It is our hope that all parties concerned will maintain this momentum of cooperation and will work harder to make substantial progress at the second expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbouring countries, to be held in Istanbul in November.

Mr. Suescum (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Panama, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Ambassador Khalilzad for the briefings that they have given us. We also take note of the concern the Secretary-General has expressed on the question of Iraq. We also thank former Special Representative Ashraf Qazi for his important work at the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The delegation of Panama is aware of the very difficult conditions in which he and all UNAMI personnel have worked.

Iraq is experiencing a critical situation, and great attention must be devoted to it not only by the Security Council but by the international community in general. We are deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation as a consequence of the violence taking place in Iraq. The UNAMI report on human rights in Iraq which was released on 11 October shows the darkest side of this conflict: millions of Iraqis forced to abandon their homes, many of them living in dire conditions, without access to food and basic services, with children being particularly vulnerable to disease.

In view of this situation, the United Nations must take on a more active role in Iraq, providing assistance in order to strengthen the Iraq Government's capacity to respond in the best possible way to the humanitarian needs of its people. UNAMI should carry out its work in an impartial but not a neutral way. Its activities should take into account all political, religious and tribal sectors. Otherwise, it will only feed resentment and create more violence. Only in that way will progress be achieved in the social and material reconstruction that can bring with it a reduction in violence and the return to their homes of the current 4.2 million displaced and refugee Iraqis.

National reconciliation requires a true commitment from the international community to rebuild the institutions of a country that is divided by deep wounds from the past. We call on the United Nations to redouble its efforts in its activities to

achieve inclusivity in the political process and dialogue in Iraq. We stress the preponderant role of leaders of Iraq in this context. Those Iraqi leaders need to have political courage. Only in that way can violence be reduced, and only by reducing violence can due respect for the human rights of millions of Iraqis be guaranteed.

We recognize the progress noted by the International Compact with Iraq in its mid-year report, and we trust that the international community, especially neighbouring countries in the region, will continue to support this initiative.

We also would like to recognize the importance of Iraq's presence and participation in the Council's deliberations. It is important that in the future the Council continue to listen to Iraq's opinion on the participation of the United Nations in the conflict.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the report before us and the representative of the United States, Ambassador Khalilzad, for his briefing on the activities of the Multinational Force in Iraq.

We view positively the rounds of talks, negotiations and visits by the Iraqi Prime Minister to neighbouring countries and further abroad in trying to find lasting solutions to the problems of Iraq. We also welcome the ongoing work of the International Compact with Iraq and we note the commitment of the participants, who work in partnership with the Government of Iraq to ensure stability, security and economic reconstruction.

Notwithstanding those positive developments, my delegation remains gravely concerned that the security situation in Iraq is still precarious. We reiterate that any resolution to the conflict in Iraq must include an all-inclusive political process and national reconciliation and constructive dialogue with all neighbouring States.

In that regard, we welcome the conference on Iraq that is soon to be held in Istanbul and attended by its neighbours. The role of regional actors cannot be overemphasized, and my delegation supports all efforts aimed at addressing the violence and the issue of internally displaced persons and refugees. Regional cooperation is necessary for ensuring stability not only in Iraq, but in the entire region.

The continued humanitarian crisis is cause for serious concern and requires urgent collective attention. If unresolved, the issue of internally displaced persons and refugees could have dire consequences for the country and indeed the entire region.

We were disturbed by reports of activities by military contractors that have resulted in the deaths of innocent Iraqi civilians. We therefore once again call upon all those involved in Iraq to exercise extreme caution and for tighter regulations governing the actions of private security companies.

It should be noted that the recent human rights report of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) indicated that UNAMI shares the view of the International Committee of the Red Cross that

> "private military firms must respect international humanitarian law and that the increasing recourse to their services 'risks eroding the fundamental distinction between civilians and combatants'". (UNAMI, Human Rights Report, 1 April-30 June 2007, para. 22)

Resolution 1770 (2007) bears testimony to the determination of the international community to assist the Iraqi people in moving beyond the current crisis. My delegation strongly supports an expanded United Nations role in Iraq, in line with our commitment to multilateralism and conflict resolution. The United Nations has a particularly important role to play with regard to national reconciliation in Iraq. As the Secretary-General indicated in his report, the United Nations not only enjoys good relations with all parties across the political spectrum in Iraq, but also has the advantage of relying on past best practices gained from operating in other global conflicts. However, with regard to a more direct role of the United Nations, as resolution 1770 (2007) itself implies, an expanded role can only be realized as "circumstances permit" (*resolution 1770 (2007), para. 2*). The safety of United Nations personnel must be an overriding consideration.

We reiterate that, notwithstanding the events that led to the current situation, the Security Council has a responsibility to ensure that the powers granted to the Multinational Force in Iraq are exercised in a manner consistent with the decisions of the Security Council, that Iraq's natural resources and the funds in the Development Fund for Iraq are used for the benefit of

the Iraqi people and that international law and human rights laws are upheld and respected by all parties.

Mr. Biaboroh-Iboro (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting on Iraq relating to the work assigned to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). We would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for the briefing that he gave on the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 1770 (2007).

A perusal of that report provides a review of the overall situation in Iraq, with signs of hope but also — and primarily — areas of great concern. In fact, Iraq remains a country where violence reigns, fuelling insecurity with tragic consequences for the daily lives of people and increasing the phenomenon of internally displaced persons and refugees flowing to neighbouring countries and further. It is urgent for Iraqi authorities, who hold the primary responsibility for protecting their people, to take appropriate measures to reduce that violence in order for the decline in the number of casualties noted in September not become a distant memory.

My delegation nevertheless welcomes the ceasefire by the Mahdi army and the alliance of the Sunni insurgents against Al Qaida, which has contributed, even if only minimally, to a reduction in the violence. As emphasized by the Secretary-General in his report, the challenge will be "transform these military-political developments into a basis for national reconciliation." (*S/2007/608, para. 65*)

National dialogue must continue in Iraq without complacency, but also without exclusion, in order to meet the challenge of violence and insecurity and roll back the threat of civil war, which has for so long hovered over the country. That effort, which must be led by both political and religious Iraqi authorities, must also be strongly supported by the international community, which must not let its assistance flag in that regard.

We are grateful to the Multinational Force, which is carrying out a dangerous task in extreme conditions, as just reported to us by the delegation of the United States. However, we call on the Force to take into particular consideration the repeated instances of civilian casualties in its operations, so as not to lose the hard-won support of the Iraqi people.

The same concept must be applied to private armies that are not controlled by the Iraqi Government. In that context, we welcome the adoption of resolution 1770 (2007) of 10 August, which has broadened the mandate of UNAMI and the involvement of the United Nations in coordinating tasks to rebuild Iraq in all areas.

Congo notes the specific measures called for by the United Nations to follow up on resolution 1770 (2007). The acknowledged experience of the United Nations is incomparable in important areas such as political and institutional assistance, in particular in promoting political dialogue and electoral assistance, economic development with a concerted implementation of the International Compact with Iraq, the protection of human rights, humanitarian aid and legal and judicial assistance. There is no doubt that that experience will make a great contribution to rebuilding Iraq, which we all want to see unified, democratic, prosperous, sovereign and at peace with itself and its neighbours. In that regard, the constructive commitment of neighbouring countries and other countries in the region, as suggested by the Secretary-General, remains vital to ensuring the stability of Iraq, and my delegation encourages that vision.

In conclusion, my delegation would call for solidarity on the part of Member States of our Organization in supporting both financial and logistic resources for Iraq in its difficult task of reconstruction.

Finally, we are pleased with the appointment of a new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and wish him much success in his difficult work.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing. I also take this opportunity to extend our thanks to Mr. Ashraf Qazi for the outstanding work he has done in and for Iraq in his previous capacity of Special Representative for Iraq, as well as to all involved staff of the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). I also thank United States Ambassador Khalilzad for his report on behalf of the countries making up the Multinational Force, among them my own country, Slovakia.

As we have heard in the briefing, Iraq continues to face many challenges, with the security situation on the ground remaining highly complex. We regret and

deplore the continuing high level of violence in Iraq and its devastating effects on almost every aspect of life. It remains a source of our constant concern. We strongly condemn all those acts of violence and call for additional efforts and measures to improve the security situation, the protection of civilians and the overall humanitarian conditions, which are truly alarming, as we heard in the briefing by Mr. Pascoe.

Nevertheless, encouraging developments and initiatives have been taking place at national, regional and international levels recently. We believe that those concerted efforts are vital in assisting Iraq to bring about stability, security and prosperity in the country.

In this respect, the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1770 (2007) in August, renewing and extending the mandate of UNAMI, is a significant and welcome step. Slovakia supports a strong United Nations presence and expanded mandate in Iraq to help that country in its transition towards stability, democracy, the rule of law and economic prosperity. We are convinced that increased United Nations assistance, strengthened presence and expanded role will make possible further advances in genuine political dialogue, national reconciliation, economic reform, respect for human rights and the rule of law in the country. We hope the Iraqi leadership will use this assistance to achieve a sustainable solution to the crisis in Iraq.

I would like to use this opportunity to reaffirm my country's support for a secure, stable, democratic and prosperous Iraq and to reiterate our commitments to this goal. In this regard, Slovakia also reaffirms its unambiguous support for an active United Nations engagement and role in implementing the International Compact with Iraq. We are encouraged by the conclusions of the mid-year progress report, which highlighted significant achievements in many sectors despite the difficult security situation.

We also welcome the establishment of the Compact secretariat as an agency of the Government of Iraq, which will facilitate the practical implementation of Compact plans and activities on the ground. As a member of the European Union (EU), Slovakia expresses its readiness to participate actively and constructively in common EU efforts to promote and implement Compact priorities.

We fully share the view that the regional actors, mainly Iraq's immediate neighbours, could and should play a more active role in promoting Iraq's peace and stability. That would benefit not only Iraq, but also its neighbours in turn, as well as the wider region. We agree with Mr. Pascoe that constructive regional engagement and contributions to the success of Iraq's stabilization remain instrumental and are in the interest of all Iraq's neighbours. We are therefore looking forward to the next expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbours, to be held in Istanbul early next month. We hope that meeting will further enhance a process of regional confidence-building through concrete dialogue and practical cooperation.

At the same time, we continue to believe that the active engagement and full responsibility of the Government of Iraq in the process of transition and stabilization remain decisive. To put it simply, the Iraqi ownership of this process is truly fundamental. Without it, it will be difficult to succeed in tackling the many challenges faced by this country and its people.

In this regard, we strongly encourage the Government of Iraq, together with all relevant parties and leaders in the country, to make substantial progress on the promotion of political compromise and genuine national reconciliation. It is imperative to act responsibly and work across ethnic, sectarian and political divides.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that it is important that all possible efforts be undertaken to address the increasing humanitarian suffering of a large number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons. Appropriate measures are also needed to alleviate the heavy burden carried by neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan and Syria, in this connection. The role and activities of such bodies as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration remain important and highly required. However, here again — and especially in this particular case — we see how imperative it is to promote successful national dialogue in the reconciliation among all constituencies and communities in Iraq. Only such an approach can effectively prevent further outflow of people and enable Iraqi refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes.

Finally, we also would like to join others in wishing the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General all the success in his new mission.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I would like to join colleagues in thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his presentation of the Secretary-General's report. That is the first report on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) since the adoption of resolution 1770 (2007). I would also like to thank Ambassador Khalilzad for his own presentation on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq, of which the United Kingdom remains the second-largest contributor.

I would like to echo the Secretary-General's thanks to Mr. Ashraf Qazi for his tireless work as Special Representative for Iraq over the last three years. We look forward to working closely with the new Special Representative as he takes steps to implement the enhanced role, as set out in resolution 1770 (2007).

The Secretary-General reminded us this morning of the point in his report that there is now an opportunity that should not be missed. Over the last eight months, as set out by General Petraeus in his testimony to the United States Congress and by Ambassador Khalilzad today, the Iraqi security forces and the Multinational Force have had significant and positive impact on security in Iraq, with sectarian violence falling and successes against Al-Qaida.

These are very welcome developments, and they need to be followed up by political steps towards national reconciliation, driven by Iraqis and supported and facilitated as necessary by the international community. We encourage Iraqi leaders to build on the agreements reached during the leadership conference in August. In particular, we are keen to see further meetings of the Prime Minister, the President and his two Vice-Presidents to reach agreements on key political issues. We welcome the priority the new Special Representative has said he will give to promoting national dialogue, as Mr. Pascoe set out today.

Iraq is not going to succeed without the full backing of its neighbours and States in the region. I echo what colleagues have said in welcoming the proposal made by the Secretary-General, at the high-level meeting on Iraq last month, to establish a secretariat for regional cooperation. We hope that this can be discussed further at the Iraq neighbours meeting in Istanbul in November, where the Special Representative's participation will be very welcome. We hope that the meeting will approve the Secretary-General's proposal. The sooner the secretariat is established, the sooner the principle of sustained regional engagement and cooperation can have a beneficial, practical effect.

The international community has to play its part, too. Key partners have reiterated their commitment to Iraq within the expanded neighbours' process and at the high-level meeting. This week, the European Union committed itself to more active support for Iraq and the United Nations presence.

The United Kingdom remains steadfast in its support of Iraq through our military, diplomatic and development efforts. Following discussions with the Government of Iraq and our Multinational Force partners, Prime Minister Gordon Brown set out the United Kingdom's military and economic plans in the south of Iraq, where we have lead-nation responsibility within the Multinational Force.

As a result of the progress we have made in training Iraqi security forces, and based on conditions on the ground, we expect that provincial Iraqi control will be established in Basra province in the next two months. That would complete the transfer of responsibility for security to Iraqi control in the four southern Iraqi provinces that have been under British responsibility. British forces will then focus on training and mentoring the Iraqi army and police, securing supply routes and policing the Iraq-Iran border, while maintaining the ability to come to the assistance of Iraqi security forces when called upon. Subject to military advice nearer the time, we plan to move to a second stage of overwatch in the spring of 2008, when we will have fewer troops, with a more limited reintervention capacity, largely focused on training and mentoring.

In parallel, we will be supporting the economic reconstruction work announced by Prime Minister al-Maliki in July, including by helping to establish a new Basra development commission, strengthening the engagement of the international private sector in the south and providing advice on investment and growth.

International support for provincial authorities is important as they coordinate projects in the south that will have a lasting effect. We are working closely with the United Nations to advise on and facilitate the establishment of a United Nations presence in Basra over the coming months. I would draw attention to the request for financial and logistical assistance made by the Secretary-General, as set out by Mr. Pascoe today,

which are needed to allow the United Nations to implement its role fully. I hope that Member States will consider what support they can provide.

As I said at the beginning, there is an opportunity now for Iraq and for us all that we must not miss.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report (S/2007/608) he has submitted pursuant to resolution 1770 (2007). We would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his introduction and update on the report. We also wish to thank Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for his briefing on the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I).

By resolution 1770 (2007), the Council expanded the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the political and reconciliation processes, while the Multinational Force maintained its lead role in maintaining peace and security in the country. The situation in Iraq remains challenging and the degree of success in UNAMI's work will largely depend on the willingness of Iraqis themselves to bury their differences for the sake of peace. In that regard, Ghana is encouraged by the series of legislative initiatives that the Iraqi leadership announced on 26 August 2007, aimed at breaking the impasse in the political process. We are also encouraged by the effort by the Constitutional Review Committee to submit its final report to the Council of Representatives by the end of this year.

Ghana welcomes the steps taken by the Secretary-General, including his meeting on 22 September 2007 with the participants of the expanded neighbours' meetings — a meeting aimed at mobilizing regional support and cooperation, which are essential in facilitating the full and effective implementation of the mandate of UNAMI — and the progress of the International Compact with Iraq. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of the Compact secretariat, as well as the administrative and technical support being provided on an interim basis by the United Nations, the World Bank and other development partners. My delegation further wishes to underscore the importance of the six-month workplan being developed to streamline the activities and implementation of the International Compact for Iraq.

It is my delegation's expectation that the next expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbours, which is to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, will contribute to the satisfactory resolution of issues relating to energy, refugees and security — among other issues with far-reaching regional and global repercussions.

In the light of recent ethnic tensions along Iraq's borders, Ghana appeals to all sides to exercise restraint, and calls on Iraq's neighbours to continue to play constructive roles in the quest for durable peace in the region.

In conclusion, Ghana remains concerned about the political, security, economic, humanitarian and human rights situation in Iraq. It wishes to commend UNAMI's work in promoting an all-inclusive political dialogue — including its support for the constitutional and electoral processes in Iraq — in order to create an enabling environment for addressing the challenges confronting the people of Iraq. Ultimately peace, reconciliation and unity in Iraq can only be achieved and sustained by Iraqis themselves.

Finally, it is our hope that the collective endeavours of UNAMI, the Multinational Force and neighbouring States will lead to the outcome the people of Iraq and the international community desire, namely, stability, unity and reconciliation in Iraq, in the interest of world peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to Mr. Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his presentation. I would also like to thank Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, Permanent Representative of the United States, for his statement on behalf of the Multinational Force.

We have before us the first report (S/2007/608) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) pursuant to resolution 1770 (2007), which included the expansion of UNAMI's mandate. That expansion has enjoyed wide acceptance in the Iraqi Government, which considers it a reflection of its continuing demands for activating and strengthening the presence of the United Nations in

Iraq. We are confident that the skills, ability, and effectiveness of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. de Mistura, along with his team, will play a major role in the success of UNAMI's efforts in Iraq.

On behalf of the Government of Iraq and my delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Qazi for his efforts as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq during the previous period. We wish him continued success in his new position as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Sudan.

The Secretary-General's report presented an account of the major political developments in Iraq, UNAMI's activities, developments in the security situation and the status of the International Reconstruction Funding Facility for Iraq (IRFFI). We support the Secretary-General's valuable remarks at the end of his report. However, we would like to outline a few key aspects related to the main challenges facing Iraq. Those challenges are still present, but their danger has begun to diminish. They impose on the Government and people of Iraq enormous tasks that need to be accomplished.

The first challenge is terrorism and the means to confront it. The security plans carried out by the Iraqi army and the national security forces with the assistance of the Multinational Force have contributed to surrounding the terrorists in separate parts of Iraq. The remnants of Al-Qaida, along with the Saddamists, are suffering continued defeats. That has been clearly reflected in the security situation in Iraq, which has witnessed tangible improvement, and the decline in the levels and number of terrorist activities, along with a significant reduction in the threat of civil war in Iraq.

The second challenge, which is a legacy of the previous regime, is a shattered infrastructure and a weak economy caused by internal and external wars waged by the former regime in Iraq. It was therefore incumbent upon the Government of Iraq to launch ambitious plans for comprehensive reconstruction, to provide the necessary services for the citizens of Iraq and to rebuild the economy on a sound and modern basis that would enable the Iraqi economy to contribute effectively to the international economy. However, Iraq cannot accomplish those goals without the effective assistance of the international community.

The International Compact with Iraq, which was launched at Sharm el-Sheikh in May 2007, plays a significant role in that respect. It has reinforced and strengthened national and international commitments in the political and economic fields, the rule of law, the reinforcement and protection of human rights, and the establishment of democracy. As is well known, the United Nations has a lead role in the Compact.

The third challenge is achieving national reconciliation, and here I would like to refer to the statement made by the Iraqi Prime Minister before the General Assembly on 26 September. He said:

> "We think of national reconciliation as a life boat, a perpetual peace project and a safe harbour for the political process and the democratic experience. We also believe that national reconciliation is not the responsibility of the Government alone. It is a collective responsibility held by the political powers, intellectual leaders, religious leaders, the educated, civil society organizations and all the active powers in the Iraqi arena. National reconciliation is the strategic choice that has saved our country from slipping into the pit of a sectarian war that was planned by the enemies of freedom and democracy after they blew up the tomb of the two Askari imams in Samara." (*A/62/PV.6, p.31*)

Despite those challenges, the Iraqi Government is continuing the reconstruction process in different fields. The budget for 2008 has been set. It is the largest budget in Iraq's modern history. A sum of $10.5 billion has been allocated to investment programmes, and the budget for the provinces has increased by 25 per cent relative to last year's budget. The investment law, which will transform the Iraqi economy from a centralized to a market economy, has been approved, and the Iraqi Government has completed a draft oil and gas bill that will secure the fair distribution of Iraq's oil revenues. Furthermore, the Government is also working towards strengthening the purchasing power of Iraqi citizens and raising the salaries of current and retired employees. It is also preserving the stability of Iraq's currency and preventing its fluctuation against other currencies.

With regard to political reconciliation, the Iraqi Government has completed an accountability and justice bill that it has presented to the Council of

Representatives as a substitute for the de-Baathification law. Tens of thousands of officials of the former Government have been returned to their former Government positions regardless of their political affiliation.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, there is concern about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Iraq due to the flow of refugees to neighbouring countries and the internal displacement of people escaping terrorist, militia and criminal activities. The Iraqi Government has been working hard to fulfil its responsibilities in that regard and to create suitable conditions for the return of refugees and internally displaced individuals to their homes by confronting illegal activists regardless of their sectarian or political affiliation.

The improvement of the security situation in several unstable areas has contributed to the return of a large number of families to their homes. However, the problem continues and requires support and large contributions from concerned international organizations, foremost among which are the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and UNESCO. Those organizations need to assist the refugees and the host countries alike, and the Iraqi Government has pledged to offer its assistance to those countries as well.

Regarding human rights, the main challenge for the Iraqi people is terrorist activities and crimes that target innocent civilians. We are pleased to see positive signals in the Secretary-General's report on the cooperation of the concerned Iraqi authorities and the authorities of the Iraqi Kurdistan region with United Nations human rights officials. We hope that the upcoming visit of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment will achieve positive results in reinforcing and protecting human rights in Iraq.

Pursuant to resolution 1770 (2007), UNAMI's mandate covers critical and essential issues related to the present and future of the new Iraq. The most important of those are UNAMI's role in national dialogue and reconciliation, the requirements of holding elections and referendums, and assisting in constitutional review, in addition to achieving compromise regarding internal borders and facilitating regional dialogue concerning the issues of border security, energy and refugees. There is no doubt that those issues are critical and should be addressed with specific mechanisms and with the prior approval of the constitutionally elected Iraqi Government, as stated in the letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 6 August, contained in document S/2007/481, which refers to the Iraqi Government's desire to expand UNAMI's mandate. Without doubt, the effective implementation of that mandate requires the return of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes to work in Iraq and to increase their staff in the field.

We look forward to Iraq's playing an active role in achieving stability and security in the Middle East. Iraq aspires to be an arena for all parties to engage in dialogue, rather than a space for settling issues. Towards that end, we initiated the neighbouring countries' meeting and hosted the American-Iranian dialogue in Baghdad because stability and security in Iraq positively affect the security and stability of the whole region and contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security.

To achieve that goal, Iraq must be capable of advancing itself and should be able to shake off the legacy of the former regime and be liberated from its financial burdens. Iraq is still suffering from the heavy burden of compensating for the Kuwait invasion by the Saddam regime, while it remains in need of the support of the international community and the donor countries. Iraq has paid large sums amounting to more than $22 billion dollars, and it continues to pay.

In that regard, I would like to refer to the letters of the Prime Minister of 24 June and of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 15 August addressed to the Security Council concerning that issue. The letters request the Council at the present time to suspend the deductions and to reduce the proportion of deductions to a level that Iraq can maintain given its current situation. That would be achieved in coordination with the Compensation Committee until the matter can be addressed at an international conference or resolved bilaterally between Iraq and the countries concerned. We hope that the Council responds positively to Iraq's request.

The President: There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.